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localization of cities in the valleys also holds true for nearly all the main tributaries of the Yangtse, such as the Chialing, the To, and the Min to the north, and the Chi-chiang and the Chien-chiang to the south. Particularly, wherever two major streams converge, a big urban conglomeration is always found. The most noticeable examples are Chungking at the confluence of the Yangtse and the Chialing; Lu-Hsien on the Yangtse and the To rivers; I-ping on the Yangtse and the Min; Lo-shan on the Tatu and the Min rivers; Pei-ling on the Yangtse and the Chien rivers; and Ho-chuan on the Chialing and the Pou-Chu rivers (Fig. 7). 361

It is almost a rule that most towns are situated on the small river terraces, whereas the big urban conglomerations are invariably localized on the broad and high water terraces or at a confluence of two big rivers. This situation is due mainly to the fact that in a region like Szechuan Basin, where water transportation is a vital factor, it is only natural that urban centers should occupy sites accessible to water transport. Even though many of the streams are not fully navigable at all times during the year, the river valleys offer the lines of least resistance and furnish the easiest means of access to the interior of the Basin.

The principal disadvantages of the urban settlements on river terraces are the limited areas of the sites, thus hindering an adequate development of the town patterns. Furthermore, with the great fluctuation of the high- and low-water levels in most of the rivers of the Basin, as we shall see later, the hazards for flood are great. This latter fact has accounted for the presence of houses perched on awkward looking understructures of poles and posts. These difficulties are particularly apparent in the sections of the cities situated on the lower (20-meter-high) terraces of the rivers.

The spacing of the big urban units, generally not over 100 kilometers and often less, depends upon many conditions including the length of the navigability of the streams, the level of the terrace where they are situated, and the relative extent and prosperity of the hinterland of each of the urban units.

In their outer appearance, most of the urban units in the Basin are compactly built. In general, the houses have only one story. There are no yards or sidewalks in front of the houses and thus the houses abut the streets. The streets, in their turn, 363

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363 are narrow, in most cases not over eight to ten feet wide, and are paved with limestone slabs. The arrangement of streets, as a rule, is in harmony with local topography and with the general pattern of the settlement in question.

361 Like many other long settled and unplanned urban communities in the Orient, most of the urban centers in the Basin have no sharp delineation in their functional areas. In fact, many of the functional areas are so juxtaposed and intermixed that it is almost impossible to describe them.

366 Taking Chengtu, for example, the city, in so far as division of functional areas is concerned, is so undifferentiated that nearly the whole city may be considered as predominantly residential in function. This may even be true in some of the so-called business streets, because there are always families living behind shops and stores on the business streets. The matter is further complicated by the fact that families behind these shops may also carry on some handicraft manufacturing activities. Thus, business, residential, and manufacturing functions are all present in one area. Nevertheless, in many cases, one type of establishment or operation unit (such as shops, factories, residences, etc.) is so conspicuous that "functional cores"[1] may be recognized with relative ease, even though the delimitation of the "boundaries" of these "functional cores" cannot be made sharply.

361 An impressive feature of the urban scene of the Basin is that every city has a city wall. Although many cities have recently torn down their walls as a symbol of modernization, many of them still keep this age-old feudalistic structure. The city walls, made of bricks, are in general about 45 feet high and 3 feet wide. Owing to the absence of tall buildings in most of the urban areas, the city wall affords an ideal panoramic view of the city.

505 6. Transportation Patterns of the Basin

a) The major water routes.---Water routes are by far the most important means of transportation in the Basin. There are, all told, large and small, navigable and otherwise, 270 streams

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[1] By "functional core" is here defined as a conspicuous clustering-together of a number of establishments or operation units which perform a specific or principal function in that area or locality.